(a) whether Government have decided to purchase fighter aircrafts from Russia recently;

(b) if so, the names, the number and other details thereof, the price of each such aircraft and when they are expected to reach India;

(c) whether these fighter aircrafts are on the pattern of MIG21, MIG 25 and MIG 29, which are Russian products; and

(d) how such aircrafts shall be able to face the challenge of US or China fighter aircrafts?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) Government constantly review the security environment and accordingly decide to induct appropriate equipment and to make other arrangements for adequate defence preparedness. The purchase of aircraft is made in accordance with the established Defence Procurement Procedure.

Stress management in Armed Forces

1688. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether incidents of suicide among Armed Forces' personnel have been increasing;

(b) if so, the details thereof, year-wise during the last three years;

(c) the steps taken for stress management commensurating to the emerging hazards in their duty, since their rising mental/physical stress attributable to their prolonged engagement in countering terrorist infiltrations and insurgency, especially in inhospitable terrains;

(d) the details of Government agencies and NGOs engaged, infrastructure created/dedicated and parameters adopted to meet the enhanced need of stress management of our Armed Forces' personnel; and

(e) the procedures followed in identification and selection of the NGOs for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) The total number of suicides reported in the years 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 (till 5.3.2007) in the Army, Navy and Air Force are as under:—

Year	Army	Navy*	Air Force
2004	100	05	13
2005	92**	05	23
2006	120	02	24
2007 (Till 5.3.2007)	16	01	04

*The figures include cases of Coast Guard also.
**This includes 15 attempted suicide cases.

(c) Army has already taken several steps to cope with the stress within its ranks. Some of measures taken for stress management are as under:—

(i) Rotation of units and individuals have been ordered to minimize exposure to stress.

(ii) Leave policy has been liberalized permitting splitting of casual leave and annual leave.

(iii) Better man management and prompt attendance of grievances at unit level.

(iv) Improved accessibility of leaders and frequent interaction of junior leaders with the soldiers.

(v) Religious Teachers, JCOs of Army Education Corps and Regimental Medical Officers have been identified as 'Psychological Health Mentors' at unit level and their services are being utilized accordingly. Psychological Health Mentors who are trained in Psychiatric centres of various hospitals have been posted at different units.

(vi) 50 Junior Commissioned Officers from Army Medical Corps have been trained as Counsellors in Northern and Eastern Command where troops are engaged in Counter Insurgency operations.

(vii) Identification and counselling of persons who are at higher risk of combat stress by Regimental Medical Officers, junior leaders and Unit Commanders.

(viii) Training capsules on relaxation exercise including Yoga and meditation have been introduced.

(ix) All Chief Ministers have been requested to make the civil administration more responsive to the problems of serving soldiers and their families.

(x) Steps are being initiated to strengthen Rajya Sainik Boards and Zilla Sainik Boards in all States to take necessary follow up action on the grievances of soldiers in their home towns/villages.

(d) There is no proposal to engage NGOs for stress management in Armed Forces. Armed Forces have enough infrastructure and expertise to handle the problem.

(e) Does not arise.

Contracts by BRO for construction and maintenance of roads

†1689. SHRI SURENDERA LATH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Border Roads Organisation gives contracts for construction and maintenance of roads of strategic importance to private contractors, while it has no shortage of army personnel and civilians;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the total length of roads/highways of strategic importance, in kms; constructed by Border Roads Organisation so far, State-wise;

(c) the total number of projects being run by Border Roads Organisation, State-wise;

(d) whether any projects is under construction by Border Roads Organisation in Orissa; and

(e) the norms for awarding projects to Border Roads Organisation in different States?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) No, Sir. Roadworks are executed departmentally, however, construction of some major bridges is done through contract.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) A Statement is attached (*See* below).

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Construction of roads by BRO is decided on the basis of strategic requirements of the Army and security considerations.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.